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ABSTRACT

Collected within this booklet are examples of incidents involving interactions of a teacher with students, other teachers, administrators, and parent-community. Used in teacher education programs, these examples can provide pre-service teachers with a realistic view of what to expect in the classroom. Suggestions for use in pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher education are included. Guidelines for stimulating effective group interaction, either as small group discussion or role-playing activities, are listed. (CS)

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Interactive Incidents in Elementary School and Community

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PREFACE

INCIDENTS in Pre-Service Teacher Education

The Interactive Incidents collected in this booklet have grown out of a need to provide pre-service teachers with a realistic view of what to expect in the classroom. Used properly, these Incidents can provide a vehicle for helping pre-service teachers deal more effectively with unique school situations after they leave the sheltered collegiate environment. Even during the student teaching experience, students frequently teach without true authority and independence. Often they do not have close contact with other teachers and administrators. As a result, inexperienced pre-service teachers frequently have a rather narrow view of classroom and school interactions. The Incidents in this booklet may be used to help bridge the gap between idealized preservice preparation and professional teaching. Incidents may provide rationale for theory to be developed in a course, or they may permit students to simulate the strategies which have been presented. The Incidents are appropriate for use in group discussion or as a resource for role-playing activities. Specific suggestions concerning the use of the Incidents in teacher education have been included in the final chapter.

The Incidents in this booklet have been classified in chapters which focus primarily upon teacher-student, teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator, and teacher-parent-community relationships. However, these divisions are not always precise. There is an inevitable overlapping of the categories just as there is in the schools from which the Incidents have been taken.

The Incidents can, of course, be grouped in other ways. They can be classified by specific issues or educational processes. The Topical Index which concludes this booklet lists the Incidents under such issues as discipline, drugs, evaluation, safety, sex education, etc. The index will key an Incident to a particular issue or theme for convenient reference.

The Incidents in this booklet can serve as a basis for effective workshop meetings with in-service teachers. Experienced teachers should recognize the Incidents as real ones; many teachers will have lived through similar experiences. Regardless of this fact, however, teachers often lack objectivity because of their proximity to an immediate problem, and seldom, if ever, do they have an opportunity to consider other professional opinions concerning alternative solutions to their own problems. In-service meetings can provide an open forum for objective consideration of a variety of solutions and strategies without the psychological implications of real situations. (People are not threatened when they can describe how "someone else" would handle an incident.)

The Incidents may also be used to identify potential or real problems in a school and to begin work toward their solution. Teacher-student, teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator and teacher-community problems occur regularly. Appropriate solutions to such problems require effective communication among and objectivity on the part of those involved. Administrators or department chairmen may use the Incidents to stimulate objective discussion, to encourage communication, and ultimately to develop strategies for effectively handling teacher-oriented problems.

See the final chapter of this booklet for more specific suggestions concerning the use of these Incidents in teacher education.

The Incidents in this booklet have been prepared primarily to help you consider human relationships which are part of the real world of the classroom teacher. Teachers everywhere have lived through experiences similar to these Incidents, and the authors believe that through contemplating them, you may develop more effective skills for resolving the problems encountered in teaching.

Each Incident printed in this booklet is followed by a small amount of space in which you may record some of your own thoughts on relevant issues. What responses are possible? Which response is most appropriate? What other information should be sought?

The authors do not believe that there is one best solution to each Incident. The best solution will depend upon the particular individuals who happen to be on the scene; each situation in the real classroom will have its own unique variables. Teachers will want to develop strategies for resolving incidents which arise in their own classrooms. To that end the suggestions which follow have been prepared.

1. Sometimes an immediate response to an Incident is necessary. The reactions of an experienced teacher are usually based upon experience and attitudes. Develop a repertoire of responses which is compatible with your own philosophy of teaching.

2. Some questions from students are inappropriate for adequate class discussion at the instant the question is raised. The environment may not provide a good climate or sufficient time to deal with all relevant variables that an objective look at the particular issue would demand.

3. Be aware that your attitudes, feelings, and comments may be interpreted as factual information. Students sometimes think of the teacher's responses as facts and view the teacher as an authority figure.

4. Keep in mind that your own views are not the only ones on an issue. Talk to other teachers, counselors, and administrators about your responses. Seek advice before responding to some situations.

5. Be aware of community attitudes. Is the community liberal or conservative? Do parents often become involved in school issues? You will be in a better position to pursue your own objectives if you perceive in advance the reactions of various influential members of the community.

6. When community concern is aroused, do not ignore it; do not isolate yourself; make an effort to understand the positions of community members and respond to their concerns.

7. Try to stay in tune with the intellectual development and the personal involvements of the individual student. Know your individual students as thoroughly as possible. Listen to them.

8. Be honest; be yourself; use common sense.

I. Teacher-Student Interactions

I-1. You are a primary grade teacher working with 30-five to seven year-olds. By December most of your students are able to work independently at the interest centers in the room. Two students, Jim and Susan, both somewhat non-assertive with their peers, continually come to you tattling that other students are not doing the work that they are suppsoed to do. How do you resolve this problem?

I-2. You are teaching a 6th grade science activity in which the students are using matches to light the candles being used as a heat source. Shortly after the class period starts Mark asks for permission to go to the restroom. Five to ten minutes later Mark returns and Jack asks to be dismissed. Within two minutes Jack rushes back into your room and tells you that paper in all the waste cans in the restroom is on fire. How do you proceed?

I-3. In your third grade class you have a highly capable and vocal student, Debbie, who periodically challenges your authority in class. At times she appears to be argumentative just for the sake of disagreement. After you've explained the solution to an arithmetic problem, Debbie stubbornly refuses to accept the answer-- says, "I'm going home--" and hurriedly leaves the classroom. By the time that you reach the classroom door she has run down the hall and out of the building. What do you do?

I-4. In your 6th grade class your students wrote stories in their reading class. While reading the stories you notice that Randy's and Kristin's stories are both about game-hunting expeditions and have the same basic plot. In the past Kristin frequently has failed to turn in assignments on time and you suspect that she has copied Randy's story. What do you do? Do you confront Randy? Kristin? Both of them? Neither of them?

I-5. As part of your science program you have a terrarium in which live several toads. One day you return from recess duty to find two boys poking at the toads with pencils. Several students have gathered and are encouraging the activities of the two boys. How do you preceed? How can you turn this episode into a science/nature learning activity?

I-6. In your intermediate grade art activity the students are making structures with clay. As you are talking with one boy about his structure, a wad of clay lands on the desk next to you. What do you do?

I-7. For the last month your 5th grade students have reported that pencils and other school supplies have been missing from their desks. During the same period of time you've noticed that Steve, a perpetual borrower, had had a plentiful supply of pencils and has been generous in loaning supplies to other students. You suspect that Steve has been taking supplies from other students' desks. How do you handle the situation?

I-8. Two students are fighting on the playground. One of them has been an exemplary student while the other has a reputation for being a trouble-maker. A crowd of students has begun to gather. What is your immediate reaction? What action do you take?

I-9. You are teaching in the middle grades. For an earth science unit the students have chosen to study reasons for dinosaur extinction. You believe that you are handling the idea of evolution objectively and with care. One day in class a student informs you that you have ignored the Scriptural version of "Divine Creation". He asks you to include this in the unit. What do you say to the student?

I-10. In spite of careful supervision one of your students cuts his hand on a broken thermometer during a science class. The student rushes up to you followed by several others. What immediate action do you take? You believe the student needs immediate medical attention. Do you leave the rest of the class? What do you do?

I-11. In your science class you encourage students to carry-out a wide variety of individual and group projects. You have indicated, however, that all projects must be approved by you before students begin working on them. Sam and Scott, two of your most responsible students, have looked through one of your science project books and have decided that they would like to build a rocket that "works". You have never supervised such a project before. What is your initial reaction to their proposal? The boys are very enthused about their idea and you don't want to turn them off entirely. What do you do?

I-12. You are introducing a new social studies unit to your class. After five minutes you observe that while most of the students are attentive, several are chatting with one another or are generally unconcerned with the discussion. What do you do?

I-13. A new student has transferred from another school into your 5th grade classroom. During his first week in your room he tells you that he can't read the tests used in your classroom. You administer a reading inventory and discover that the student is reading on a primary grade level. What action do you take?

I-14. After several weeks of school you discover that a highly capable 6th grader in your room is not completing her assignments. You tell her that you are concerned about her work and ask her why she isn't completing the work. She tells you that most of the work is boring because she already knows much of it. What is your response?

I-15. During a science lab period one student has been disturbing other students. You have asked him twice to return to his project. He has just dumped a portion of another student's experiment into the sink. What action do you take?

I-16. After repeated attempts at completing an arithmetic assignment, one of your students becomes hostile because you won't accept her work. She begins to cry and yells, "You always pick on me." The entire class is quiet and waits for your response. What do you say?

I-17. During a flu epidemic one-third of your second grade students are absent on a particular day. On that day your class was scheduled to visit the post office as a culminating activity for a social studies unit. How do you handle the class day? Do you proceed with planned activities?

I-18. Your 6th grade students have study time at the end of math and reading classes. Most students use the time to work on assignments. You notice that Tim and Steve are looking at a magazine and are snickering as they turn the pages. How do you react?

I-19. You intercept an obscene note being passed in your classroom. How do you respond?

I-20. During the past week you've noticed that the conversation of several boys in your room has included racial slurs against students of a minority race in your classroom. How do you handle the situation?

I-21. Early in the school year you find that several of your students wander into class several minutes late after lunch each day. How do you respond?

I-22. You are the new math and science teacher in a Middle School that uses modular scheduling. One student missed your classes during the first week of school. Another teacher told you that the student has a reputation for skipping classes. How do you handle the situation?

I-23. In your math and science interest center you have a variety of activities available for the children in your room. After several weeks you notice that pieces of equipment are beginning to disappear from the center. How do you deal with the situation?

I-24. One student in your class behaves very childishly during an activity. His behavior distracts others in the class and, in your opinion, even constitutes a safety hazard at times. You talk with the student, but the behavior persits. How do you respond?

I-25. Your students are engaged in a variety of lab activities. You feel that it would be appropriate for a small group to pursue its investigation outside in the school yard. The students seem to be responsible but should you send them outside without supervision? What should you do?

I-26. You are in your first year of teaching an individualized math course wherein the students move at their own pace. You just don't seem to have enough time to keep in touch with all of your students. You feel you may be spending too much time with a small number of students on relatively trivial problems while some students are not receiving enough attention. How can you become more effective? How can you utilize your time more efficiently?

I-27. During the week students in your room break a cassette recorder and the pump on the fish tank. You are not sure if the breakage was accidental or if it was due to horsing around in the room. What action will you take?

I-28. You overhear one of your 6th grade girls muttering to another about the dull social studies class you just completed. Should you say something to the students? If so, what?

I-29. Students in your class have been using "street language" that you personally feel is inappropriate. Should you let them know how you feel about it? By doing so, will you rish cutting off dialogue with them?

I-30. In your current science activity your intermediate grade students are investigating the physical properties of common while household powders. You have discussed safety precautions with the children and have instructed them not to taste the powders. You have just observed two boys who are indiscriminately mixing powders and tasting the mixtures. What action do you take?

I-31. Several terraria have been set up in your classroom in support of an ecology unit your class is studying. One terrarium contains crickets while the second one contains a toad. When you return from recess you notice commotion and excitement around the terraria. Someone has placed the toad into the terrarium with the crickets. As the children return from recess they gather around the terrarium to watch the toad attack the crickets. How do you respond? Do you proceed with your scheduled math lesson?

I-32. Several boys in your class are in the reading corner looking at hunting and fishing magazines. You overhear two of the boys boast about how over the weekend they mistreated the sheep and goats in the small zoo at the city park. Do you respond? If so, what do you say?

I-33. For several reasons your teaching style has been group paced in social studies; all students study the same concepts in the same period of time. You have worked hard to be an efficient teacher, but you are frustrated. You are aware that some talented students in the class are bored while others are unable to understand the ideas being discussed. What can you do about the situation? What options are available?

I-34. Your 6th grade class has just begun a math unit on multiplication of decimal fractions. As a result of your diagnostic testing, you discover that Sue and Terry do not know the multiplication facts for the 7's, 8's, and 9's. They will have difficulty with your planned assignments if they have not mastered the "basic facts". How do you provide for their specialized needs?

I-35. Jerry is a student in your 4th grade. He is an only child who lives in a rural area. Away from school he has little interaction with children. As a result he has little opportunity to participate in competitative sports. You've noticed that he is often one of the last ones chosen when students divide up for team sports. Recently Jerry told you that he doesn't want to participate in P.E. because the other boys make fun of him. How do you respond? What action do you take?

I-36. This is your first year using interest centers as the basis for instruction in your primary grade classroom. You are pleased with the progress that children are making in learning to use the centers responsibly. However, you are concerned about Sherry, who has difficulty staying with an activity for more than a few minutes. Lately you've noticed that she spends much time wandering from one center to another watching the activities of other children. What action do you take?

I-37. You are a new 3rd grade teacher at your school. One morning after recess you notice that Tommy is missing. Your students inform you that after a disagreement on the playground he ran away. One boy indicated that, "Tommy always does that". What immediate action do you take?

I-38. Your 4th grade students brought "mystery liquids" to be used in a science activity entitled "Observing with Your Senses". Susie brought her "mystery" to you and challenged you: "I bet you can't guess what my liquid is". One whiff indicated to you that it was bourbon. What is your response?

I-39. Susan had been a quiet and withdrawn, "above average" student in your 6th grade class. Within recent weeks she has become a consistent discipline problem in class. During a conference with her she tells you that she caused trouble on prupose so she could stay after school instead of going home to do chores. She added that both her parents work and that she would like to stay at school rather than go home. What is your immediate response? What action do you take? Do you inform the principal? the parents?

II. Teacher-Teacher Interactions

II-1. You observe a shouting match in the corridor between one of your students and another teacher. The teacher has challenged the student for being in the hall; the student swears at the teacher, throws up his hands in disgust, and walks toward you. How do you react? What do you say?

II-2. School policy demands that all teachers stay at school until 4:00 PM, a full fifteen minutes after the last school bus leaves. From your room you can observe students boarding buses as well as cars leaving the parking lot. Throughout the first semester you observe certain teachers leaving before the buses do. Your 6th grade student notice this too, and comment on the subject. How do you handle the situation? What do you say in response to the comments of your students? Do you bring this issue up before the administration or teachers? How do you respond?

II-3. You are one of five teachers in a middle grade unit. During the day your students have several teachers. Halfway through the first semester some of your students complain to you that another teacher is consistently unfair in dealing with discipline problems and in assigning homework. From your professional associations with the teacher, you suspect that the criticisms are valid. How do you deal with the situation? What do your say to the students? Do you discuss the matter with the teacher?

II-4. The social studies and music teacher in your team of four middle grade teachers is suddenly turned on by the "unstructured" classroom. Students are permitted to sit on the floor, listen to music, and visit, as long as they do the required work. When the students come to your math class after social studies they are too "wound up" to concentrate and participate in your class activities. How do you respond?

II-5. There is only one activity classroom available for science and art in your school. Your 4th grade class uses the room for science after a 5th grade art class. Often you and your students must spend part of the period cleaning up the room before you can use it. What action do you take? You have tactfully mentioned the problem to the art teacher with no results.

II-6. Teacher A calls you from your planning and conference period to her own classroom to point out a new teacher who is outside with her students flying kites. She scoffs at the activity and labels it "modern education". The students flying kites are far enough away so as not to cause any distraction to other classes. Not knowing the circumstances surrounding the kit flying activity, you see nothing wrong with the idea. How do you respond to Teacher A?

II-7. As a third year teacher, you applied for and received a summer grant to develop a math laboratory for the primary unit. Some of the teachers in the unit accuse you of developing the lab for personal glory. They say the lab activities duplicate what they are already doing with their students. As a result they neglect to have their students use the equipment in the lab. Your principal hears of these accusations and asks that you give more time to the non-participating teachers. How do you respond?

II-8. You have planned an activity for your class that involves student-structured class time. Part of the activity will involve data collection in the form of a survey conducted outside the classroom, working throughout the school and in the community. After notifying the other teachers of your plans, you receive several complaints. How do you react? Should you answer each complaint personally?

II-9. Your 6th grade classroom is across the hall from the kindergarten classroom. In your "open classroom" students freely interact with each other throughout the day. The kindergarten teacher is critical of the "noise" in your room. You believe that the "noise" is not disruptive and is a result of enthusiastic student involvement. The kindergarten teacher complains to the principal. How do you respond?

II-10. You have mice in your classroom for a six week unit on animal behavior. One day several mice escape and two teachers storm into your class and report that the mice are in the hallway. They demand that you stop everything and catch the mice. How do you respond?

II-11. At the end of your first year of teaching, teachers in your primary unit were encouraged to develop a series of interest centers to offer the children during the following year. Even though the idea received enthusiastic support you feel that several of the teachers will fail to carry through in implementing the project in the fall. You would like to begin planning and developing the centers during the summer but don't receive overwhelming support for the summer project. You feel that in the end implementing the program may be "your thing". How can you get some real work done and involve other teachers on a continuing basis without alienating anyone?

II-12. You initiate plans for individualizing your classroom instruction which involves the use of audiovisual equipment and many commercially produced individual learning packets. Your plans are approved by your assistant principal responsible for instruction. You are proceeding with your plans by identifying materials located in the instructional materials center (IMC). You plan to relocate much of the necessary materials, now in the IMC, in the workroom and in your classroom. The librarian complains to the principal that these materials should not be removed from the IMC. You believe the principal might oppose your plans. How would you proceed? What steps might you take to insure the realization of your plans?

II-13. One part of a hamster cage in your classroom is broken. It can be fixed with some screen and a few nails. You send two students to the science room to fix the cage. The science teacher tells the students that his classroom is not a repair shop and that they should fix the cage in their own room. Do you respond to the students in front of the rest of the class? What do you say? Should you discuss the matter with the science teacher?

II-14. A campaign has been started by a local organization to have the school board hire a larger percentage of female administrators. The principal of your school vehemently opposes the idea and makes his views known regularly. You are growing tired of his "grandstand" activities but wish to avoid an argument. Do you take time to explain your views on the issue? How do you proceed?

II-15. Recent efforts of the state and local professional associations to raise teacher salaries have met with very limited success. In fact, your local school board has refused to meet in collective bargaining sessions with the teacher's association. The reason given in: "teachers are public employees and as such have no collective bargaining rights". A drive begins to form a local chapter of a national teacher's union in order to provide more bargaining power. Should you join? Do alternative exist? What are the good and bad points of union versus association membership? Should you join no organization?

II-16. Your local teachers association includes administrators as well as teachers. The rationale is "We're all on the same team, and we should pull together". Some teachers have been calling for the association to "dump those spies for the school board. Teacher unions don't include administrators in their membership". Interestingly enough some of the principals want to form their own elite organization. "Those teachers aren't interested in representing us". How do you feel about the issue? What would you say publicly?

II-17. You are confident that your hard work in the classroom is having positive effects on your students. Yet, you feel frustrated; you are so busy with day-to-day detail that you feel you are losing sight of appropriate long-term goals in teaching. You don't feel you are growing sufficiently to remain a top quality teacher; you feel that you need more contact with the outside world and with concerned colleagues in teaching. How can you make such contact?

II-18. You are upset as you look about and observe a few teachers who border on being "incompetent". In preparing for current contract negotiations, the teacher's association is seeking to strengthen the tenure rights of teachers. There is even talk of "forcing them to grant tenure after two years". How do you respond on this issue when talking with other teachers?

II-19. The school district has been trying to improve human relations in the classroom. Several meetings have been scheduled to deal with human relations problems. Some teachers are saying "those meetings will be a waste of time; I don't have any problems with my students." A few teachers are checking to see if the meetings are mandatory. "I suppose I'll play along with it, if it's necessary to keep my job". Would you respond to these comments of fellow teachers? How?

II-20. A new set of social studies materials has been adopted by your school district. To facilitate the transition to the new program, workshops have been sponsored by the district. After a year funds supporting the workshop activities are cut, and the workshops are to be suspended. You have attended the in-service workshop sessions and found them to be very worthwhile. What action can you take to see that workshops are held in the future? Are there alternatives?

II-21. You receive a phone call from an irate parent concerning a comment you made at a recent faculty meeting. You are not too concerned about your comment but more concerned with how the quote was "leaked". Would you express this consternation to the parent? Should you take up the issue with the other teachers? the principal?

II-22. In your primary grade unit there are six teachers. Three of you have independently set up interest centers in your classrooms. On Fridays from 12:30 to 3:00 PM all children are free to work at centers of their choice. You would like to expand the program so your children could attend centers in the other two classrooms. How do you proceed? One teacher agrees to try your proposal while the second is skeptical of the plan. How do you react? You would like to see the three teachers who have never used interest centers in their classrooms try them. You would be willing to help them organize and set up a center in each of the rooms? How do you proceed without antagonizing the teachers?

II-23. You are a new second grade teacher in your building. After the first month of school you notice that another second grade teacher seldomly interacts with other faculty members. Several weeks later the teacher confides to you that she has no friends among the other teachers and that her work is not appreciated in the school. How do you immediately respond? How do you feel about being a confidant for this teacher? Shortly afterward the school secretary tells you that the other second grade teacher's behavior is again erratic similar to her behavior several years ago when she was hospitalized for emotional problems. How do you respond to the secretary?

II-24. You are a new first grade teacher in your building. By the spring semester you believe that you have your classroom functioning efficiently and smoothly. One day an older teacher in your building who is not particularly well accepted by other teachers tells you that she has heard negative comments from parents and other teachers about your classroom. She says she was criticized similarly and consequently was never accepted in the school. She makes suggestions on how you can improve your teaching and be accepted by parents and faculty. How do you respond? Do you discuss her comments with other teachers and the principal whom you consider to be your friend?

II-25. You are a new third grade teacher at your school. It is the school psychologist's practice to deal with severe discipline problems by putting them in a "time out" room where they can "act out" their frustrations. After two months of school you find that you have several students who continually disrupt your classroom. These students have not responded to the various techniques that you have tried. You do not agree with the practices of the psychologist who is very influential in your school. What actions do you take?

II-26. You teach in a middle school in which math, science, and social studies are taught by teacher specialists. In your individualized math program about one-half of the students have completed a unit on the Metric System. Several of your students who have not completed the unit tell you that the science teacher expects them to know the system and they were "supposed to learn" it in math. He told the students that he did not have time to help them with it. How do you react? Do you introduce the metric unit to the students even though you suspect they will have difficulty with it? Do you explain to the science teacher why some of the students have not completed the unit?

II-27. Mrs. James, a teacher in your primary unit, has a friend who is completing a graduate degree in nutrition at a local university. The graduate student has developed nutrition education units that she would like to "try out" in the second and third grade classrooms. Mrs. James and the graduate student present the plans to the principal and teachers in the unit. After hearing about the food tests and blood tests to be conducted you consider the activities to be too

II-27 Cont'.

advanced for primary grade children. In addition, some dangerous chemicals will necessitate that the teachers, rather than the students, do many of the activities. Several experience teachers enthusiastically support the program and agree to participate. How do you, a first year teacher, react?

II-28. You have taught for five years in your district and are newly assigned to teach grade 4 at the Taft School. During the workshop prior to the opening of school several teachers comment on the "problem students" assigned to your classroom. What is your reaction? Do you discuss the "problems" with the teachers?

II-29. After several weeks in your new school you sense that there is a long-standing feud going on between the sixth grade teacher and the principal. The teacher tells you his side of the story. You suspect that he is soliciting your support. How do you respond?

III. Teacher-Administrator Interactions

III-1. Your middle grade unit has adopted a new science curriculum in which objective tests are not used to evaluate student learning. Yet your school requests that you give letter grades to students and that you have a file of evaluations available for parent conferences. How will you evaluate and grade the students? How will you justify your procedures to administrators and parents?

III-2. The science curriculum committee has voted to adopt a new inquiry-oriented science program for the elementary grades in your district. Professionally you oppose adopting this program and believe that ethically you can not teach the program in your classroom. How do you respond?

III-3. The teachers association bargained for, and received, a contract setting maximum loads at 25 students. This fall the budget has been cut drastically, and the principal informs you that class loads will be increased up to 35 students. How do you as an individual respond? Would you strike? How do you justify your position?

III-4. Your school has adopted a new social studies program for grades 4-6. Teachers are to attend an implementation workshop which meets for two hours once a week after school during the fall semester. The course is taught by a professor from a local college. During the previous summer you took the same course from the professor when it was offered on campus. Should you be required to attend the in-service meetings? How do you proceed?

III-5. You have a number of serious discipline problems in your classes. During the first two weeks you have had to send twelve students to the assistant principal for disciplinary actions. The principal calls you into his office and says, "What is the matter? You should be capable of solving your own discipline problems. We can't solve your problems for you". How do you respond to these remarks from your principal? How do you resolve your discipline problems in general?

III-6. Your new principal has been "chatting" with your 6th grade students and has been asking evaluative questions about your teaching. You are upset. What action do you take?

III-7. Another first-year teacher in your primary unit is having serious discipline problems with her class consisting of "average" students. Yet, she is very concerned and you believe her to have a great deal of potential if given a chance. By January the principal decides that the teacher is not doing her job properly and he puts the blame directly on her. He tells her she is on "probation". How do you respond to this problem?

III-8. One planned activity for your 6th grade class will involve an afternoon visit to a local nursing home. The students are to question the residents about past community history. The school administrators do not see any value in the trip, however, and they reject the idea. Teachers in your unit have planned the trip with care and feel the trip could be of real value. As a concerned teacher, what can you do?

III-9. Most teachers in your building have recommended that participation in the districtwide science fair be abandoned. They have indicated that previous fairs have been loaded with mediocre and unscientific projects that have concumed disproportionate amounts of class time. One teacher complains "some kids receive a lot of help from parents and this is unfair to others". The principal, however, is anxious to maintain the science fair tradition. He feels that science fairs have been excellent for public relations and have motivated younger students to develop an interest in science. He believes that if the reported problems do exist, then the teachers, "should clean those problems up, but on with the fair". As a 5th grade teacher where do you stand? How do you express your position to the principal? Is a confrontation appropriate? How do you express your position to the

III-9 Con't.

other teachers? If there is a fair, should all students have to participate? What procedures should be employed to stimulate appropriate projects of high quality?

III-10. Your students have been involved in appropriate, supervised interest center activities in the corridors outside your classroom. Although the noise level has been a bit high, you believe that the students have worked very responsibly. Your principal calls you in and says that other teachers have complained about the distraction caused by your students. "Classrooms are for learning; corridors are for passing". How do you respond?

III-11. The administration and school board have decided that middle school students should have a greater role in selecting their own programs. It is made clear that you must try the innovative miniunit approach to teaching. After one year of operation you firmly believe that the students are not learning basic techniques, are unprepared for higher level miniunits, and randomly repeat certain concepts. What action do you take? With whom can you talk about your concerns?

III-12. You develop good rapport with your students during your self-paced classes. You are asked by two students for permission to go outside the building to work on their environmental study plots. These students seem trustworthy and have been progressing well in their work, but school policy prohibits students from working "unsupervised" outside. The students have completed their other assignments and need time to work on the plots. You must remain inside to help students at learning centers. What would you do? If you give permission, should you explain your actions to the administration?

III-13. Your science class is going on a field trip to a rock quarry. You have planned the activity very carefully, and you have arranged for some parent chaperones. You have prepared worksheets for the student activities to be performed at the quarry. Permission slips are required by the school district, but they do not legally release the teacher from any liability. On the day of the trip several students forget to bring in their permission slips, and they do want to go on the field trip. Would you permit the students to go? Could you take any further action prior to departure to permit the students to attend?

III-14. On the last day of the workshop prior to the opening of school you have been asked by your principal to meet on Saturday morning to complete the planning of your multi-grade unit which goes into operation when school starts on Monday. One of your team members

III-14. Con't.

responds that the contracts don't require that teachers work on weekends. He asks that teachers in the unit be given release time early next week to complete the planning. You prefer to complete the planning and avoid disruption during the first week of school. How do you respond?

III-15. Your principal has recently instituted an "Emphasis on Planning". All teachers have been asked to submit a completed plan book for the next week by Friday afternoon. In your individually guided program it is impossible for you to plan for each child a week in advance. In addition you do much of your planning over the weekend. How do you respond to your principal's request?

III-16. In most schools in your district the teachers are organized into teaching teams. It is the school board's proposal that in the smaller schools the team leaders take over some of the administrative details and that one principal be assigned to two buildings rather than one principal per building. Should there be the introduction of this additional supervisory level between teachers and the superintendent? What problems do you foresee? What advantages?

III-17. Your budget request for science and art supplies has been submitted and cut by the principal, the superintendent, and the school board. You don't have the money to do "your thing", and you feel that your request suffered more than did those of some other teachers. What do you do about it? What is an appropriate system for preparing and cutting budget requests?

III-18. After several visits to your classroom your new principal wants to talk with you about your goals and your strengths and weaknesses in teaching. You know that he submits to the superintendent written evaluations concerning all teachers in the school. How honest can you be with him?

III-19. Your principal is completing his first year in your building where teachers are organized into teaching teams. Two of the three team leaders believe that the principal is ineffective and through political maneuvering are attempting to have the principal removed from his position. You believe the principal has made a positive contribution to the school during the year. You are aware of the maneuvering and want the principal to be treated fairly and be given another year in your building. How do you proceed? Do you confront the team leaders? Do you discuss the issue with the principal? other teachers? the superintendent?

III-20. You would like to see all school facilities used by as many students as possible. You recommend that during the winter months the gym be available on Saturday mornings for use by the children. The principal listens to your suggestions to open these facilities, but takes no action since "there is insufficient money and staff to do this". Is there any other action you can take? Should you express your concerns to parents? Can community support be generated to resolve the problem?

III-21. During the past two weeks your social studies class time has been interrupted for a fire drill, a school play, and now an environmental movie. You believe that these interruptions have seriously interfered with academic progress. Can you prevent further interruptions? How can you cope with the situation?

III-22. Your school district has a curriculum guide for the science and social studies units to be taught in your 4th grade class. You believe that some of the unit topics are inappropriate and irrelevant to the children. How much flexibility do you have not to teach according to the guide? How do you proceed in developing your program?

III-23. School policy requires that abbreviated lesson plans be submitted to the principal's office one week in advance. The requirement has been designed "to foster good staff organization and to provide guidance to substitute teachers in the event of your absence". After submitting your plans for a few months, you discover that several teachers regard this policy as a ridiculous waste of time. These teachers have not been submitting their plans to the office, and one teacher tells you not to bother to do so. At this point how do you respond? Do you believe in preparing plans? Do you continue to submit yours to the principal's office?

III-24. You have been asked by your principal to organize an environmental education program for your school. You feel you are inadequately prepared to do this. You tell him that your preparation is inappropriate, but he responds by saying, "You don't have to have a college degree in a subject in order to teach it; the best teachers learn right along with their students". Do you agree with the principal? How do you respond?

III-25. After observing your social studies class, the district curriculum supervisor criticizes the values clarification activities you have been doing with your students. She emphatically directs you to the curriculum guide and declares, "That's why the guide was written; teachers should follow it". She leaves the room before you can explain that you and the principal have agreed on the activities you have been using. Should you ignore the criticisms of the supervisor? Should you ask the principal to speak to her in your behalf? Should your follow the curriculum guide?

III-26. You are one of three 6th grade teachers in your school. At a faculty meeting your principal announces that in the spring your 6th grade students have the opportunity to participate in an exchange environmental education program with 6th grade students living near the ocean about 900 miles from your school. You and one other teacher are enthused about setting up the program. The third teacher is reluctant to participate because there are "too many insurmountable obstacles" in setting up the program. How do you react? Do the two of you who support the idea proceed in exploring possibilities for the trip?

III-27. For several years your school has had top priority for a new addition. Finally the funds have become available. During the planning the teachers have asked for a science activity room. You learn that the principal and superintendent are recommending that a home economics room, an industrial arts shop, and a multipurpose meeting room be added. The teachers feel that their wishes are not being considered. What action do you take?

IV. Teacher-Parent-Community Interaction

IV-1. You have worked hard with several teachers to plan a multidisciplinary program that would involve art, science, reading, and social studies. Your proposal includes a request for additional funds for materials and one "released time" day every two weeks for planning purposes. Your proposal receives notice in the local newspaper. The newspaper publishes an editorial opposing the new "frill". Several letters to the editor published in the next issue, criticize the schools and also oppose the "frill". How would you react? Should you write a letter to the editor?

IV-2. You feel you have been quite successful in relating with students; some return to your classroom after school to rap and to seek advice. Occasionally you drive a student home because he or she does not have transportation. A fellow teacher advises you that this practice is legally very unwise; "your career is at stake". What are the risks involved? What are the alternatives?

IV-3. During a local election, you plan to invite all the candidates for major, including a "rabble-rousing" left wing candidate, to meet with your social studies class. Your plans have been submitted well in advance. Just prior to the date the "liberal" is scheduled to speak, community and parental pressure is applied to the principal to cancel the engagement. What do you do in response?

IV-4. After doing some thinking and reading, you decide to "open up" your 6th grade class. You have become convinced that an unstructured approach fits your teaching philosophy better than the more structured methods used in the past. You decide that you will no longer lecture and that students will have to make significant decisions about their own objectives and activities in your classroom. During the first three weeks of school, you have provided your classes with interesting and relevant discussions and plenty of encouragement for self-directed learning. After this time, you encourage your students to select activities of interest to them for study for the remainder of the grading period. Two weeks later, an irate parent calls the principal and complains that her daughter is just wasting time and is not learning anything in your room. The principal arranges for a conference with you and with the parent. How would you respond to the principal and to the parent?

IV-5. Some parents have volunteered to serve as teacher-aides in your classroom. After a few weeks you feel that some of them are too "authoritarian" with students. You want to deal with the issue, but you don't want to offend the parents or dampen their interest. How do you proceed?

IV-6. You have been distrubed by your past efforts to teach science using a traditional, group-paced approach. This year you have developed a series of interest centers related to the science units taught in your grade. Students are now permitted to work on any topic in science they wish to explore. You act as a guide and resource person. During the second grading period you receive a number of requests for parent-teacher conferences. Two parents indicate that their children often complain of having nothing to do in science class. How would you respond?

IV-7. Teachers in your school take turns on afternoon bus duty. You conscientiously carry-out your duty and have no complaints of your students missing the bus. Recently when other teachers are on duty you have received calls from a mother of one of your 6th graders who repeatedly misses the bus. You suspect this is due to the student's "horseing around" on the playground after school. The mother demands that you "see to it" that her child does not miss the bus. How do you respond?

IV-8. You are one of two third grade teachers at your school. You are socially acquainted with several parents of children in the other third grade classroom. After several weeks of school have passed in the Fall one of the parents "corners" you at a party and tells you about some of her child's unhappy experiences at school. You suspect that the parent's description of the situation is accurate. The parent solicites your help in having the child moved to your classroom. How do you respond?

IV-9. Sex education units are taught to the 4th and 6th grade classes at your school. Each year parents are invited to an orientation program conducted by the teachers and local physicians who teach the units to the children. You believe that the entire program is well planned and is effectively taught. After the orientation program two parents of your 4th grade students call you and protest the use of the sex education program in your school. What is your immediate response? What can be done to resolve the issue?

IV-10. On Sunday a local church group holds Sunday School classes in your school. Recently on Monday mornings when you come to school you've noticed that your classroom is disarranged and students complain that things are missing from their desks. What actions do you take?

IV-11. As a social studies teacher in a Middle School you teach a six week unit on "Religions of the World". This year you have invited various community religious leaders to speak to your class. In an attempt to be "objective" you have also invited an agnostic and an atheist. Your principal has given his approval to invite the speakers. After the agnostic has visited your class you receive phone calls from several irate parents who protest the visit of the "liberal and anti-religious" speaker. These parents are influential leaders in the community and school. How do you respond? Do you cancel the visit of the atheist? Do you alter your program in any way?

IV-12. A student in your 4th grade class is having difficulty learning "long" division. You suspect that part of the student's problem is that he is being confused by the "help" that he is receiving at home. During a parent conference you express your concerns to his mother who is a former teacher. She said that she believes that the math program used in your school is ineffective and that she prefers that her son learn division "her way". How do you respond? What recommendations do you make?

IV-13. Several times during the first semester of the year a student in your class has been picked up by the police for being truant. The child has been absent for several days and you call his home to ask if he has been ill. His mother tells you she is keeping him home until he finishes cleaning his room. What do you say to the parent? What action do you take?

Teacher education programs should provide a variety of experiences which foster appropriate teaching styles and which are relevant to the real world of teaching. All too often, however, university instructors are not able to provide adequate resources through which students can identify with the abstract educational theory presented. Undergraduates, in particular, in such an environment often perceive their formal course work in education as irrelevant.

An optimum teacher education program involves a multitude of planned experiences in the schools wherein undergraduates work with experienced model teachers. However, contemporary logistical and administrative considerations often preclude the implementation of such a total program in teacher education environments. A well-balanced program for pre-service teachers will include field experiences, micro-teaching, and role-playing in addition to more formal classes presenting theory and foundations in philosophy, psychology, and history. The Incidents are another valuable but inexpensive resource which have the potential to make teacher education programs more relevant to students.

The Incidents may be used in a variety of ways to help students and teachers focus upon issues which face teachers, parents, and administrators in school settings. In pre-service teacher education courses they may be used to provide realistic problem situations through which theory and problem-solving strategies may be developed. They may be used as rationale and motivational devices for the introduction of specific topics, and they may be used at later times as vehicles for employing those strategies which students have developed prior to work in the real classroom. Workshops which utilize the Incidents can help in-service teachers focus upon issues of professional concern.

The Incidents are primarily designed to stimulate group discussion of interesting problem situations which actually arise in the world of the classroom teacher.

Through interacting with a group and discussing the issues and alternative solutions, pre-service and in-service teachers may develop more effective techniques for resolving problems encountered in teaching. Situations portrayed in Incidents help participants investigate interpersonal relationships between professional staff members in addition to relationships between teachers and students.

The Incidents may also serve as a rich resource for role-playing activities. The group leader can assign roles depicted in an Incident to particular members of the group and ask them to act out those roles. Role-playing experiences simulating real world events may well facilitate transfer of learning (Lehman, 1970). Through interactions with the Incidents and through transactional analysis, pre-service and in-service teachers should become more sensitive to the diverse issues and personalities encountered in classroom teaching.

The classroom Incidents may be employed in a variety of teaching situations. They provide simulated settings and insights into the real world of teaching which can effectively complement conventional instructional methods. An assumption underlying use of the Incidents is the greater the level of active participation by the student, the more significant will be the learning and the resulting change in behavior. Use of the Incidents should stimulate individual students and teachers to become actively involved in the simulated situations, either when interacting with the Incidents in group discussion or when role-playing.

The classroom Incidents were written primarily for small group discussion or to be intermixed with role-playing activities. They can be employed to initiate group discussions of solutions to a problem; occasionally it may be appropriate for participants to prepare written commentary on alternative solutions prior to group discussion. Limited space has been provided for this purpose within the booklet.

The guidelines which follow should be helpful in stimulating effective group interaction using various classroom Incidents.

1. Present the Incident without interpretation. In many cases, the Incidents are somewhat vague and do not specify all the relevant bits of information. For optimal learning and involvement of participants, leaders should not add their own explanation of the Incident as this could serve to channel thought prematurely.

2. Do not imply that there is a best solution or strategy for the resolution of specific Incident. The "best" solution will depend upon the individuals who happen to be on the scene; each real situation will have its own unique variables. Discussion of those variables which may have relevance to solution options is especially profitable.

3. Limit the size of discussion groups. Discussions of the Incidents with more than eight people may inhibit the participation of some individuals while smaller groups should facilitate interaction. Occasionally, it may be appropriate for small groups to report their deliberations on an Incident to a larger group.

4. Encourage diverse group membership. Teachers in a particular subject area often have very different perspectives than do those in another field of specialization. If possible, include an administrator, a guidance counselor, a student, and a parent in discussion groups. The greater the diversity of views expressed in a group, the more beneficial the experience will be for participating individuals.

5. Follow good discussion procedure: (a) Maintain eye contact among all members. (b) Ask questions of individuals who have not participated. (c) Establish non-threatening avenues for agreeing and disagreeing with various suggestions that are made. Open discussion should permit the group to consider the merits of alternative solutions which are proposed.

6. Occasionally role-play an Incident. Some basic ground rules are: (a) Be yourself as a teacher or play the "role" given to you by the activity director. (b) Permit anyone to terminate the activity at any time for any reason. (c) During discussion after the role-playing, be honest about your feelings.

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